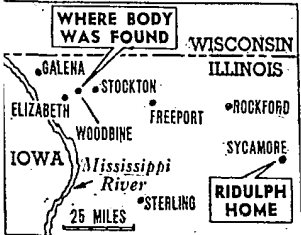


# Body of Missing Girl Found

## PARENTS OF MARIA, 7, IDENTIFY SHIRT, HAIR



MARIA RIDULPH



### Remains of Child in Woods East of Galena

The body of a girl found yesterday in a wooded area near Woodbine, Joe Daviess county, about 18 miles east of Galena, was tentatively identified last night as that of Maria Ridulph, 7, missing from her home in Sycamore, De Kalb county, since last Dec. 3.

Her parents, Michael and Frances Ridulph, identified a strand of hair and a T shirt taken from the body. They did not view the body, which was badly decomposed.

Richard D. Auerbach, agent in charge of the Chicago office of the Federal Bureau of Identification, said that decomposition had progressed too far to permit the taking of finger prints. However, the FBI plans to compare footprints from the body with footprints made in a hospital when Maria was born. A pathologist also will examine the dead girl's teeth for comparison with a dental chart of Maria.

#### Parents Go to Galena

The Ridulphs went to Galena accompanied by Assistant State's Atty. James Boyle of De Kalb county, Sheriff Alf M. Deisz, and Chief of Police William Hindenburg of Sycamore.

The body was found by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sitar of Hopkins, Minn., who were searching for mushrooms near a railway overpass. They telephoned Mrs. Emma Grubner, sheriff of Joe Daviess county, who notified Coroner James Furlong and the FBI.

The body, under an evergreen tree, apparently had been at the spot where it was found all winter. The hair was shoulder length, reddish brown, with bangs in front. This matches the Ridulph girl's hair.

#### Plaid Shirt Matches

The clothing included a plaid, black and white checked shirt. The Ridulph girl was wearing such a shirt when she disappeared. The body also was clothed in a cotton undershirt and brown anklet socks, both of which the Ridulph girl was wearing. No shoes or hat were found. The body was badly decomposed.

Maria's father, Michael, is a factory worker. The Ridulphs have three other children, Patricia, 16, Kay, 15, and Charles, 11.

At the time of her disappearance, about 7 p. m. on Dec. 3, the Ridulph girl was playing near her home with a neighbor girl, Cathie Sigman, 8. Cathie told police a blond man about 6 feet tall approached them, said his name was Johnny, and asked if they would like a piggy back ride.

Cathie went home for a pair of mittens. When she returned, Maria and the man had disappeared.

An intensive block by block and field by field search of Sycamore and the surround-

## *During Vigil for Maria*

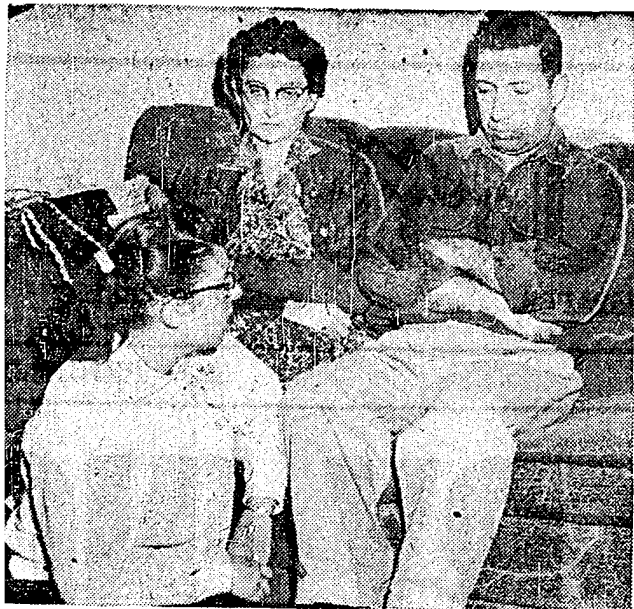
ing area, in which as many as 2,000 persons participated, followed the girl's disappearance. Searchers were aided by radio equipped cars and airplanes.

At one time, police of eight counties set up road blocks to search all autos for clews, but no trace of Maria was found.

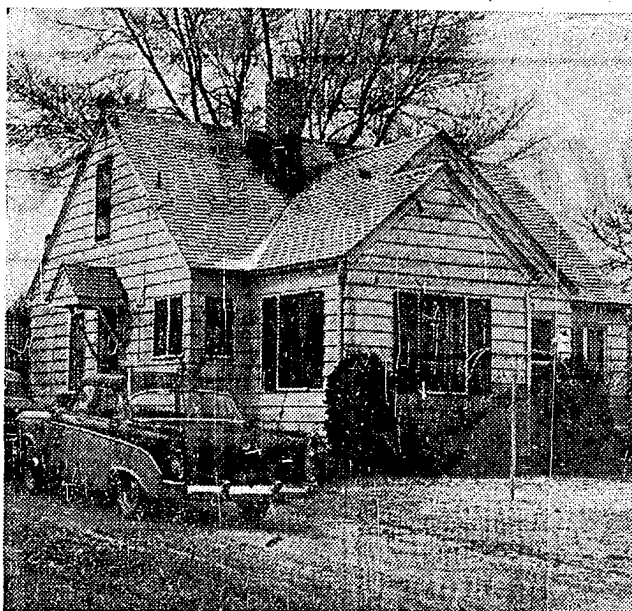
### **Search Turns to Lake**

With the breakup of winter, the search around Sycamore was resumed. Earlier this week, pumps were used to empty a man-made lake near Sycamore.

Yesterday, 20 volunteer skin divers probed a water filled gravel pit. They had planned to explore another gravel pit near Sycamore today.



Family of Maria Ridulph as they waited in Sycamore home for news of their missing daughter, 7. Sister Patricia, 16, is seated at foot of parents Michael and Frances Ridulph.



[TRIBUNE Photos]

Exterior of Ridulph home. Maria vanished from near here last Dec. 3.